

Historic Cemetery Committee Minutes
May 17, 2006

Members present: Shelly Merriam, Roy Henry, Mary Brundage, Sheryl Romasco, Jill Kenrick and Beth Butler

Absent: Doris Ostroskey

Guests: Sue Smith - Board of Health

Harry Romasco - Chairman. Uxbridge Board of Selectmen

Dick Buma - Buma Funeral Homes

Judith Collin - concerned relative of people buried in the Norden Cemetery

A copy of the Agenda is attached to these minutes.

Judy Collin addressed the newest issue that has arisen at the Norden Cemetery with the burial of Thelma Cook. The Lamoreaux Vault company backed over graves and corner markers when delivering the vault to the cemetery. Apparently the driver did not put down plywood to protect the ground, because ruts were left in the cemetery.

Judy called the Holt Funeral Home in Woonsocket, RI about the problem. Holt then contacted Lamoreaux about the issue. They have hired Tony Martini, care taker of Prospect Hill Cemetery, to fix the ruts.

Background:

The UHCC has been trying to get records of this cemetery from Ms Laurie Berthillette of Millville, MA for at least 2 years.

There has been no formal maintenance of this cemetery for about 35 years. A neighbor, Dan Foley, did help out at one time, but he gave it up 2 years ago because of other commitments. The UHCC has been taking care of it until we can figure out who should be in charge of the cemetery.

The cemetery was started by the Norden Society and members of the Lutheran Church in Millville, MA. When this church closed, members went to the Lutheran Church in Blackstone. That church has been contacted and no records can be found.

Jill Kenrick provided all present with a packet of information she has researched about the cemetery (included with these minutes) containing the names of the Norden Society Cemetery Trustees, and transcribed copies of deeds for the cemetery from the Worcester Registry of Deeds.

Judy Collin presented the committee with a copy of her grandfather's deed. This was the first time anyone present had seen a deed. Based on information from this document, Jill plans to go back to the Registry of Deeds to attempt to gather more information.

Judy has also applied for a grant from MA Historical to repair the stone wall in front of the cemetery

Dick Buma gave an overview of the challenges he is facing with this cemetery. Buma's is listed as the contact person for this cemetery in "The Green Book". (A book used by funeral home directors to find all cemeteries in MA to find cemeteries and who is in charge of them.)

Dick volunteered to be the contact person to keep the situation at that cemetery stable. Tony Martini is in charge of digging the graves there.

The two main problems he is facing:

1. People want to be buried there and have no deeds but insist they have spots
2. No one is quite sure of where the graves are.

Harry Romasco stated the UHCC could go to the Board of Selectmen and ask for legal counsel to get a ruling on what to do. The UHCC needs the records to figure out what we have in this cemetery. The UHCC also needs to recommend the cemetery be declared an abandoned and neglected cemetery according to MGL Chap 114 Section 18.

Sue Smith told us that Dick Buma is the Burial Agent for the Town. Burial permits go to the Town Clerk. The Board of Health acts only as contact group.

Laurie Berthillette was invited to the meeting, but did not show. (A copy of the letter is attached to these minutes.

After all guests left, the UHCC members discussed all the information we had heard. Our main concerns are that the cemetery has had no governing body for about 35 years, there has been no consistent maintenance for the same time period and there is no plot plan for the cemetery. The following actions were taken:

Shelly will write a letter to the Board of Selectman about our concerns. She will give them our information and state what we are looking for.

The following motions were made:

Motion:

The Uxbridge Historic Cemetery Committee recommends the Norden Cemetery on Millville Road in Uxbridge, MA be accepted as an abandoned and neglected cemetery according to MGL Chapter 114 Section 18.

Motion made by Beth Butler
Second: Mary Brundage
Unanimously approved

Motion:

The Uxbridge Historic Cemetery Committee recommends the Uxbridge Board of Selectmen pursue obtaining any and all records and information pertaining to the Norden Society, Norden Cemetery and the Norden Cemetery Commission reported to be in the possession of Laurie Berthillette of Quaker Street, Millville, MA. (Ms Berthillette has been unresponsive to all attempts to reach her for the last 2 years.)

Motion made by Mary Brundage
Second: Beth Butler
Unanimously approved

Minutes accepted unanimously at July 18, 2006 meeting.